

Frequently Asked Questions

Workforce Alliance Workforce Technology Systems Framework (RM6378)

Nobody is better placed to help you meet the challenges of NHS workforce than the NHS Workforce Alliance. As a team of health workforce experts, we are motivated by a genuine desire to make the NHS better. You can trust us to act in the best interests of the NHS – always putting patient care first.

In this document you will find a list of helpful questions and answers, split into sections for NHS colleagues and suppliers, to help you familiarise yourself with the NHS Workforce Alliance and this specific framework and how it can support you. If by the end of the document you have any queries, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

All Buyers

Who can use this framework?

Any Buyer based within the UK or Crown dependencies can use the framework and whilst the framework is aimed at the NHS, the framework can be used by anyone within the public sector (which includes higher education, emergency services, libraries etc.), and the third sector (charities).

What is the scope of this framework?

The NHS Workforce Alliance Workforce Technology Systems Framework agreement provides access to various workforce software services and providers that enable organisations to scope out their technology requirements and source them through a fair and compliant route to market.

What is the lot structure of this framework?

There are 4 lots under the framework agreement:

Lot description:

- Lot 1 – Workforce Software
- Lot 2 – Integration, Deployment & Interoperability
- Lot 3 – Professional Services & Consultancy
- Lot 4 – Overlay, User Experience and Single-User face

Does each supplier have valid experience of supporting the NHS?

As part of the framework criteria, we have engaged with organisations who have and have not yet supplied into the NHS. Suppliers have provided confidence in their software / service offerings and how this can benefit the NHS. We have also ensured that each product / service can integrate with essential NHS systems such as ESR.

Our supply chain does include organisations who have never provided to the NHS, but we believe them to add value through their product offering.

Which providers are listed on this framework?

You can locate the list of framework providers through this [link](#). For further details on product comparison or supplier service offerings, please reach out to the leading authority for further guidance.

Is there a Rate Card and Award Support Tool?

We have built a Catalogue which is inclusive of individual product / service pricing. This can support various awards made under the framework, more specifically looking at comparison and benchmarking.

How do I decide between direct award and further competition?

Both direct award and further competition are enabled via this framework agreement, Buyers can find this information within Framework Schedule 7 – Call Off Award Procedure which sets out the requirements of the routes to market.

Buyers may direct award if it is clear from the contract documents that there is one supplier who can meet your needs and provides you with the best value for money. Buyer requirements need to be fully covered by the framework specification.

Buyers should use further competition if you want to adjust the specification or terms. Buyers may also achieve better value for money through running a Further Competition.

How do I direct award?

Buyers can direct award on all lots and do this in line with your local and Procurement Act 2023 compliant sourcing process.

As part of the direct award process, you will be expected to complete the direct award approval form that can be located in the WTS – Guidance Document which will also provide you support on the lotting structure. We recommend that should you face any challenges in the access of these documents, you reach out to your local Alliance Partner/Hub who can support you.

How do I run a further competition?

Buyers will have the ability to undertake a Competitive Selection Process through this framework. You will be able to select the specific lot/s for which you require and engage / approach the awarded suppliers under the lot/s based on a shortlisting process using the catalogue.

You'll then be able to access the further competition documentation / templates which are included within the Framework Agreement and carry out the relevant process. The Catalogue will include mandatory minimum standards, evaluation process, service level agreements and key performance indicators to support you in the process.

How do I carry out a Desktop Evaluation?

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To carry out a Desktop Evaluation you will need to have access to the Catalogue. The Desktop Evaluation will enable Buyers the ability to conduct benchmarking activities based on price, product availability and service delivery. You'll be able to review based on technical response and moderated scores as part of this exercise.

Can the Buyer use their own procurement or tendering portal documents?

Buyers may use their own procurement documents, procurement portal and/or their own local sourcing processes, provided the award made is compliant with public contract regulations and the award procedure under the framework agreement.

The Workforce Alliance offers extensive resources to support with all workforce and procurement activities, if you require additional support then reach out to your local alliance partner.

What documentation do I need to complete?

For compliant routes to market, whether you are running a mini-competition or making a direct award, all documentation is available through the Workforce Alliance website. We have also included a guidance document to support in providing what documentation may be required.

Can I award multiple suppliers?

Yes. You can award multiple suppliers depending on the specification and requirement. For any doubts, please speak with your local Workforce Alliance hub.

What NHS Standard checks were carried out on suppliers?

As part of the framework, we worked with the NHS Interoperability and ESR team to put together a set of standards that support NHS Organisations with moving from Analogue to Digital interface systems. A list of these standards can be located within your Workforce Alliance Portal.

Who is the NHS Workforce Alliance?

Crown Commercial Service and NHS Procurement in Partnership have been working together since 2019 as the NHS Workforce Alliance.

As the biggest public procurement partnership in the UK, we bring together a wealth of trusted procurement and commercial expertise to benefit the NHS.

NHS Procurement in Partnership is a collaboration of four procurement hubs:

- NHS Commercial Solutions
- East of England NHS Collaborative Procurement Hub
- NHS London Procurement Partnership
- NHS North of England Commercial Procurement Collaborative

Crown Commercial Service is an executive agency of the Cabinet Office, and the biggest public procurement organisation in the UK.

How can the NHS Workforce Alliance help you?



Workforce Alliance

The NHS Workforce Alliance RM6387 Workforce Technology Systems framework is free to use for all NHS organisations, public and third sector bodies with the options of a direct award, a further mini-competition or a desktop evaluation. Where NHS organisations are challenged in filling their requirements, there is an opportunity to break glass for patient safety purposes.

We can provide subject matter expert advice and support in making an award under the framework agreement, including use of the award support tool, advice on completing award and procurement documentation. There are circumstances where assisted procurement is available.

We also offer market insight and data to support development of your workforce strategies and can support in engagement with suppliers under management where appropriate.

Suppliers

Can suppliers supply workers under Lots that they have not been awarded to?

Suppliers may engage with a Buyer directly **ONLY** under the lots to which they are appointed. Sub-contracting is enabled under the framework agreement.

Can suppliers be terminated from the framework?

Under the framework terms and conditions, suppliers can be terminated depending on certain and specific criteria that needs to be met. This can be but is not limited to things like payment to unresolved debts, change of controls, insolvency and other conditions.

Contracting Authorities can also terminate their contract depending on certain critiers that are set out in the contracting authorities' conditions.

Can suppliers who have not been awarded a place on the framework supply?

Under the Procurement Act 2023, suppliers who have not been awarded onto the framework will be able to apply onto the framework when it re-opens every 12 months of the frameworks go-live date.

Additionally, suppliers who have not been awarded a place onto the framework can seek to arrange a subcontracting agreement whereby they can work through a framework supplier in order to provide their solution / service.

Can suppliers offer discounted rates to Buyers?

Suppliers are encouraged to offer discounts to buyers where applicable. This can range from a variety of different methods and through different triggers which can be reported through the management information submission.

Do suppliers need to provide the NHS Workforce Alliance with any information?

Suppliers will be required to submit monthly management information which is recorded through Crown Commercial Services (CCS) portal. All additional details or documentation will be required / requested through the Authority.

Can suppliers add, change or amend their products, services or description of services? If so how?

Suppliers will be able to change or amend their products, services or description of services via MyLPP where you can product updates to your existing catalogue that was submitted as part of your tender.

If they are brand new products / services then you would need to resubmit a catalogue when the framework re-open's every 12 months.

I have been successful in getting onto the agreement and want to amend my pricing. How do I do this?

Pricing may be amended during the reopening of the framework under the Open Framework procedure and as set out in the framework ITT.

I want to amend terms and conditions. How do I do this?

The terms and conditions are set by the framework agreement for all suppliers. Suppliers may not amend these. Special terms may be included as part of a further competition.